



Embassy of the United States of America

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

Public Affairs Office

<http://brunei.usembassy.gov>

Press Release

April 2, 2015

Muslim-American Delegation Engages with Local Youth at UNISSA

A visiting Muslim-American delegation from the United States met on March 31 with students and professors of the Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) Faculty of Business and Management Sciences and Faculty of Sharia and Law.

The delegation was led by Shaarik Zafar, the U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities, and included Imam Mohamed Magid, Executive Director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS); Intisar Rabb, Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and director of its Islamic Legal Studies Program; Abrar Hussain, co-founder and Managing Director of Elixir Capital; and Mustafa Tameez, Founder and Managing Director of Outreach Strategists.

Titled 'Economic Integration and Business Opportunities in an Islamic Context', the dialogue session provided a forum for the delegation to talk with students about the benefits and challenges that will emerge from closer economic integration between the United States and Brunei through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, which is currently under negotiation between the United States, Brunei Darussalam, and 10 other countries.

Mark S. Dieker, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan, opened the dialogue by noting that "This delegation, led by the U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities, gives us a great opportunity to discuss what economic integration means for young people in Brunei as well as the United States."

In his remarks, U.S. Special Representative Shaarik Zafar emphasized the exceptional opportunities that TPP will bring to Muslims and Muslim-owned businesses.

Haji Mohammad Nadzri bin Haji Yusoff, Head of UNISSA's Law Program, stated that "Students and lecturers from the Law and Business and Management Sciences faculties attended the dialogue session and responded well to the delegation with questions on a range of issues. The enthusiasm shown reflected the level of knowledge and discourse of students especially in the area of Islamic Finance, Syariah Compliance issues, and the like. The delegation members seemed delighted by the positive responses given and we hope that deliberations on the same issues can be further enhanced in the future."

Dr. Fadzliwati binti Mohiddin, UNISSA's Dean of Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, pointed out that "This Dialogue session provides a unique and great opportunity for our students to express their opinions, engage in discussion, and widen their worldview and perspectives on finance and trade – in the context of Islam."

Dr. Kamaru Salam, UNISSA's Deputy Dean of Faculty Business and Management Sciences, added, "There is a need for successful businesses to be seen engaging with the youth and playing a crucial role in developing future leaders".

Media Inquiries:

Public Affairs Officer – Edward Findlay - Tel: 2384616 ext 2154; Fax: 2384604; Email: FindlayEF@state.gov

Media Liaison – Dian Idris - Tel: 2384616 ext 2127; Fax: 238-4604; Email: IdrisD@state.gov

Delegation member Abrar Hussain spoke on the compatibility of Islamic finance in the global economy, saying that "the heart and soul of Islamic finance is alive in Silicon Valley." He went on to explain that the concepts of equity and shared risk are key to Islamic finance and have helped to drive Silicon Valley's multi-billion dollar growth in recent years.

Mustafa Tameez encouraged Bruneians to view their size as a strength to be leveraged when considering the country's economic future. He said "in the information age ideas are powerful" and good ideas are not limited by size.

Imam Magid underscored the connection between Islam and the global economy. He encouraged Brunei to take a leadership role and host a conference on inter-faith entrepreneurship.

Professor Intisar Rabb of Harvard University encouraged the students, especially the young women in the audience, not to be afraid to take advantage of opportunities. She told them "Don't talk about it, be about it."

The U.S. delegation had an audience with His Majesty Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at Istana Nurul Iman on March 30. The delegation also met with Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Dewa Dato Seri Setia Lim Jock Seng, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II; Pehin Datu Singamanteri Colonel (Rtd) Dato Seri Setia (Dr) Hj Mohd Yasmin Hj Umar, Minister of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office; Pg Dato Seri Setia Dr. Hj Muhammad Pg Hj Abdul Rahman, Minister of Religious Affairs; and other relevant government offices.

###

Media Inquiries:

Public Affairs Officer – Edward Findlay - Tel: 2384616 ext 2154; Fax: 2384604; Email: FindlayEF@state.gov

Media Liaison – Dian Idris - Tel: 2384616 ext 2127; Fax: 238-4604; Email: IdrisD@state.gov